

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SY-04 USSS-00 SCS-03 SCA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 NSC-07 L-03 PPT-02 DRC-01 /099 W

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P 061945Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8511

FBI WASHDC PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, ASEC, CASC, CDES, HA

SUBJECT: EXPLOSION AT CASTEL HAITI HOTEL: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PORT-AU-PRINCE 1727, 1730

1. LOCAL PRESS FRIDAY MORNING CARRIED EXTENSIVE ACCOUNTS EXPLOSION INCLUDING NAMES AND ADDRESSES HARRINGTON AND ABRAMS. ARTICLES, PRODUCT OF INTERIOR SECRETARY BLANCHET'S "OPEN POLICY" ON INCIDENT, WERE ESSENTIALLY FACTUAL (BASED ON REPORTERS' PRESENCE YESTERDAY'S INQUEST) AND WITHOUT EXTRAVAGANT COMMENT OR PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS. LE MATIN QUOTED BLANCHET TO EFFECT THAT INCIDENT SYMBOLIZED A BIT THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY: "EVERY TIME THAT HAITI TRIES TO GET ORGANIZED TO HELP ITSELF AND MAKE SOME PROGRESS, THE FORCES OF EVIL GO INTO ACTION TO SABOTAGE EVERYTHING."

2. EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER VINCENT SAW BLANCHET THIS MORNING (FRIDAY) TO (A) INFORM HIM OF PENDING ARRIVAL PORT-AU-PRINCE OF MR. AND MRS. WALTER ABRAMS (PARENTS OF CINDY); (B) REQUEST ON THEIR BEHALF PERMISSION TO SEE DAUGHTER (IN HOSPITAL UNDER EXTENSIVE GUARD); AND (C) REQUEST PERMISSION SEE DAUGHTER TODAY TO INFORM HER THAT PARENTS ON WAY. BLANCHET WAS FORTHCOMING.

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3. BLANCHET COMMENTED TO VINCENT THAT HE REALIZED INCIDENT

WAS FAULT NEITHER OF AMERICAN PEOPLE NOR OF USG. BUT IT WAS DISTRESSING. INDIVIDUALS, HE SAID, CAN CALL UNDER EVIL INFLUENCES AND IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO GET TO BOTTOM OF AFFAIR. HE PROPOSED TO DO THIS IN OPEN, ABOVE-BOARD MANNER, LETTING CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY. HE WELCOMED CLOSE COOPERATION USG IN INVESTIGATION. HE LOOKED FORWARD TO FULL CLARIFICATION SO THAT HAITI COULD "GET THE SHADOWS BEHIND US" AND CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

4. MEANWHILE, WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS THAT PERSONS IN CAP HAITIEN WHO MAY HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH HARRINGTON BEING ROUNDED UP FOR QUESTIONING.

5. LATER THIS MORNING VINCENT AND VICE CONSUL KING INTERVIEWED CINDY ABRAMS IN COMPANY OF A HOSPITAL DOCTOR AND ONE OF BLANCHET'S AIDES. SHE WAS STILL IN CONSIDERABLE SHOCK, COMPLAINED REPEATEDLY OF SEVERE HEAD AND BODY PAINS, HER THOUGHTS WANDERED, AND SHE WAS ABLE TO ENDURE ONLY A BRIEF AND DISJOINTED CONVERSATION. SHE SAID "THANK GOD, THANK YOU, THANK YOU," WHEN TOLD HER PARENTS WERE ARRIVING THAT AFTERNOON AND PROBABLY WOULD VISIT HER WITHIN A DAY OR TWO. WHEN INFORMED THAT LOCAL AUTHORITIES WOULD WANT TO QUESTION HER ABOUT THE INCIDENT AFTER SHE RECOVERED, SHE REPLIED VEHEMENTLY THAT SHE WANTED TO HELP, ADDING RHETORICALLY "WHAT HAS HE DONE TO ME, I HOPE THEY PUT HIM IN JAIL, I HOPE THEY KILL HIM." WHEN TOLD THAT HARRINGTON HAD BEEN KILLED INSTANTLY IN THE EXPLOSION, SHE COMMENTED THAT HE HAD DESERVED TO DIE.

6. THE FEW FACTS SHE PROVIDED BEFORE DOCTOR TERMINATED INTERVIEW WERE THAT SHE HAD MET HARRINGTON IN MIAMI VERY RECENTLY. HE TOLD HER ALMOST NOTHING ABOUT HIMSELF EXCEPT THAT HE WORKED FOR AN UNNAMED BOAT COMPANY, AND HE HAD DIVORCED HIS WIFE (NAME UNKNOWN TO ABRAMS) WHO WAS SOMEWHERE IN NEVADA, POSSIBLY RENO. HARRINGTON HAD TOLD HER SIMPLY HE WANTED A GIRL FRIEND TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON A VACATION TRIP TO HAITI "TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL." SHE SAID SHE AGREED BECAUSE SHE HAD JUST BEEN FIRED FROM HER JOB IN MIAMI (NO FURTHER DETAILS GIVEN), AND SHE TOO WISHED TO

GET AWAY. SHE THEN BEGAN CRYING OUT IN PAIN, AND EXCLAIMED THAT SHE WAS GOING TO DIE. VINCENT AND KING ASSURED HER THAT SHE

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WOULD RECOVER, AND ATTEMPTED TO CALM HER BEFORE THEY DEPARTED.

7. FOLLOWING INTERVIEW, BLANCHET'S AIDE OBSERVED IT PROBABLY WOULD BE SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE SHE WOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE AN INTERROGATION, BUT BOTH HE AND HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR AGREED THAT MR. AND MRS. ABRAMS COULD VISIT HER TOMORROW AT 10:00 A.M. ALONG WITH CONSUL WILSON AND VICE CONSUL KING.

8. COMMENT: IF DEPARTMENT'S REPLY REFTELS HAD NOT RPT NOT
CROSSED THIS MESSAGE, I WOULD URGE SOME KIND INTERIM RESPONSE
BY THIS EVENING SO THAT I CAN DELIVER IT TO BLANCHET SATURDAY
MORNING (HOPEFULLY TO INCLUDE SOME USEFUL INFORMATION OR NEGATIVE
RESULTS OF CHECKS). IT CLEARLY TO OUR INTEREST SHOW SUPPORT
FOR BLANCHET'S RESTRAINED, UNPANICKED, OPEN APPROACH TO
RESOLVING AFFAIR. HE MAY BE UNDERTAKING SOME PERSONAL POLITICAL
RISK VIS-A-VIS OTHER OLD DUVALIERISTS IN PURSUING SUCH COURSE.
DECONTROL 12/31/78.
THOMSON

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